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ABSTRACT

There are several steps to developing a successful peer-helping program for an organization. The first step is needs assessment of the organization using tests, interviews, and reflection. Self-teaching or outside training can be used to become familiar with peer helping. Next, a philosophy should be created to support and guide the program's development. Structural issues of a peer-helping program include determining responsibility for coordination, training, and supervision; identifying rationale, purpose, goals, objectives, and outcomes; deciding how the program will be funded; and making provisions for maintenance and supervision. Also, it is important to gain support for the program from those associated with it such as staff, faculty, administration, board of directors, funding agencies, etc. A program budget and proposal outlining needs and goals should be developed. Students selected for the program should enjoy interacting with others, be creative, and be good at social-skill development. Training should include orientation to roles, developing helping relationships, communication skills, behavior management, leadership skills, and content skills. Peer helpers should have ongoing supervision, training, and evaluation. An administrators' guide is included. (JPT)

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The Principal's Role in Establishing a Peer Helping Program

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Dr. Elizabeth S. Foster-Harrison

Elizabeth Sabrinsky Foster-Harrison, Ed.D. has been a pioneer in peer helping for years. She has developed model peer programs which have been recognized with both state and national awards. Her own state of North Carolina's peer helping association honored her by naming their Peer Helping Service Award after her.

The author of Energizers and Icebreakers for All Ages and Stages and Tutoring: Learning by Helping, Elizabeth also has written for numerous publications, served as editor of the Peer Facilitator Quarterly, co-author an adult mentor training program, served as President of the North Carolina Peer Helpers Association, and most recently, as President of the National Peer Helpers Association.

As an educator Elizabeth has worked extensively in areas of individualized instruction, high risk youth, reading instruction, remedial services, program design, curriculum development, and peer concepts. She has served as a classroom teacher, learning lab coordinator, reading resource coordinator, adult interaction leader, coordinator of peer programs, supervisor of curriculum, and university coordinator of middle grades education.

Certified in reading, English, counseling, mentoring, and supervision with graduate work in administration, Dr. Foster-Harrison continues to view education as a life-long practice. She has extensive experience in training and consulting. She has presented dynamic programs throughout the United States, training thousands of students and adults in the development of peer programs at the elementary, middle, secondary, and adult levels.

Dr. Foster-Harrison holds a B.S. Ed., degree in English from Ohio University, an M.A. Ed. in guidance and personnel services from North Carolina State University, and a doctorate in counseling from North Carolina State University. She currently holds the position as Coordinator of Middle Grades Education at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. She is married to a high school administrator and has two children.

Dr. Judith A. Tindall

Dr. Tindall has been involved in training peer helpers and professionals in schools, community agencies and churches since the late 60's. For the last several years she has been in private practice as a psychologist, L.P.C. and consultant with Rohen and Associates Psychological Center in St. Charles.She is adjunct faculty for the graduate counseling program at Lindenwood College. Prior to this, she worked in public school as a counselor, peer helping coordinator and guidance director.

She has been a consultant to and has conducted workshops with businesses, schools, governmental agencies, church groups and hospitals concerning a wide range of topics such as leadership, team building,eating disorders, wellness, MBTI, TQM, peer helping, stress management, taking care of you. Dr. Tindall is an E.N.T.J. Dr. Tindall has been in leadership positions in local, state and national professional organizations. She was on the founding board and still serves on the National Peer Helpers Association Board of Directors and former chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee, co-Chairs the Training and Consulting committee and serves as Vice President. She was the start-up president of Missouri Peer Helpers.

She is the author of the following books. Peer Counseling, Indepth Look at Training Peer Helpers, 3rd Ed., Peer Power: Book 1, Peer Power, Book 2, and co-author of Peers Helping Peers: Training Preadolescents- Facilitator Book and Peer Helping Peers: Feelings The 3 R's-Receiving, Reflecting, Responding. She has written several articles on a variety of topics such as peer helping, caring for yourself, group work, team building, leadership, eating disorders, wellness, stress management and type development.

She received her Ph.,D. from St. Louis U. in Psychology and her M.Ed. in counseling from the University of Missouri in Columbia.She received her Specialist from S.I.U. Edwardsville in Counseling Psychology. She is licensed as a Psychologist and Professional Counselor. She is certified to teach social studies, speech, and counseling in the schools. She is married to a high school administrator and has two sons who are now young adults. She likes to play golf and is a Cardinals fan. She is trying to survive midlife and two college tuition payments.

AN ADMINISTRATORS ROLE IN A PEER HELPING PROGRAM;

A STEP-BY-STEP PLAN

Dr. Judith A. Tindall
Dr. Elizabeth Foster-Harrison

This article will focus on the steps involved in setting up a successful program. The steps involve **assessing the needs** of the community/school/agency/business/ church . The needs of the facility guide how peer helpers are ultimately utilized. The need for a peer helping program can be assessed by processes ranging from thinking about needs to a more comprehensive assessment using standardized tests and interviews to determine if a program is needed, what kind, and by whom.

The next step involves **learning about Peer Helping**. This can be done in a variety of ways such as reading or visiting other peer programs or training with N.P.H.A. or other approved trainers. School administrators and faculty should visit other schools where peer programs are in place. Agency personnel should visit other sites where programs are in place. Higher Education should visit other campuses to see the variety of programs. Learn about a wide variety of peer helping models in a variety of settings. Read the P.F.Q. and other materials in the field to get ideas for other programs.

As a result of what has been learned, the next step involves developing a Peer Helping **philosophy** which will give you the energy to develop a program and gain approval. Developing a personal philosophy and code of ethics and standards helps the professional align priorities for program development. The philosophy involves the concepts of the professionals giving away their skills, trusting peer helpers to help others and a belief that by teaching others helping behaviors, we develop a more caring society.

Once a particular type of program has been chosen, other decisions must be made to complete the **structured program design**:

*Who will coordinate the program, provide training, and supervision?
*When will peer helpers be trained, for how long, where and by whom?
*How will the program be funded?
*How will the program be maintained and supervised?

The program design is important and should be well thought out because it is the framework of the initiative or written proposal. The program needs to be developmentally appropriate and meet the needs of the school/agency/business/ church.

Next, it is important to gain **support** of others that you will be working with such as staff, faculty, administration, board of directors, funding agencies etc. This support can be through staff availability to run the program, materials, funding and support. In developing a **budget,** include specific categories and costs to both the funding organization and the supporting agency. Hidden costs must be identified carefully and included in the proposal. Be sure to separate personnel costs from training and maintenance costs.

To help gain the support for the program, it is always good to have a **program proposal.** The length and detail of a proposal depends on the scope of a program and the amount of finance required to operate it. The proposal could be a few pages, or it could be a comprehensive proposal requesting state or federal funding. If the agency can support the program, then there is no need to seek outside funding. However, many programs get started with outside funding. All funding sources, whether local, private, state, or federal, follow specific guidelines when they determine the programs they will endorse. Guidelines are usually published by the funding agency.

A clear identification of the rational, purpose, goals, objectives and outcomes is essential. The more specific the objectives and procedures, the stronger the proposal will appear to the funding agency. A specific proposal puts the funding agency in the best possible position to evaluate the request. Educate those that are approving the proposals by giving them articles about peer helping.

It is important to involve those that will be responsible for the program in the development of the program design. At this point you are the **team leader.** You may continue that role or assign that to someone that is good at developing a team. We have found that a times, "turf" issues arise, therefore, it is important that you find a coordinator that can pull together groups that are already doing prevention work in the schools, service learning, direct service, student assistance, guidance and counseling. Once that person has been identified, next is to find the appropriate **trainer** for your program. The N. P.H.A. standards identifies the type of person that is needed. That person needs to have a positive rapport with the population to be helped; experience and knowledge of program needs and goals; knowledge of fundamental principles of peer helping; positive public relations links; positive role model to various publics; knowledge of different teaching/ learning skills; ability to teach didactic and experiential lessons; ability to work with groups; participation in an ongoing training program; skills necessary for supervision, time to train, plan, evaluate and supervise. This may be one person or it may be a team effort. If your program has many projects, you may identify several people to be involved in **supervising** each project.

Steps in **recruiting** potential Peer Helpers and **selection** of peer helpers is an issue in the field that there is some controversy. They can be recruited in many ways, but it is important that they represent the target population. Although the criteria for being a peer helper differ depending on the program structure and goals, the students selected should enjoy interacting with their peers and have an aptitude for social skill development. Students should be able to see others' perspective, be creative in their approaches to decision making, and have some skill in cooperative relationships. A **training design** is essential. It is best if the peer helpers can receive credit or some kind of recognition through some form of credit or support. This will vary depending on the location of the program.

Training must include Orientation to Roles, Developing Helping Relationships, Communication Skills, Behavior Management, Leadership Skills, Content Skills in the area of helping such as tutoring, conflict resolution, helping, service, health educator, small and large group work. The length of training varies depending on the program needs, developmental level of participants, number of projects. Many programs involve one semester of basic training and then the peer helpers begin their projects and more advanced training.

Examples of how peers can be **utilized** at elementary, middle, high school, higher education, agency, community, church vary depending on the projects. Examples are tutoring, peer helping, new students, mentoring, service, peer mediation, health consultants, dramady, small group and large group projects and others. After the trainees have gone through the basics of peer helping, the professional coordinator must place their peer helpers in the most appropriate situation based on the peer helpers' skills, the appropriateness of the placement and the peer helper's personal growth. The professional is responsible for placing the peer helper in a situation in which he or she can be successful and feel good.

During the time they are serving their target populations, **supervision** and ongoing **training** is essential. Peer helpers must be monitored. The person responsible for supervision may not be the same person that conducts the training. The supervision must be on a regular basis to monitor progress and help solve problems. Someone also must be available for ongoing support. **Facilities** must be available for training peer helpers and for the peer helpers to work with their students. The facilities should be pleasant, warm, and representative of the attitude and feelings of the group being served.

To help the program be successful, it is important to provide **evaluation** of the selection process, training, impact on the target population, peer helpers themselves. An evaluation system should effectively determine the strengths of the program and areas in need of improvement. Evaluation of the entire program is vital. School climate surveys may be conducted before and after the program. Changes in peer helpers and the target population may be evaluated.

The role of the administrator is one of support for the program, a leader to get the program started and someone that can provide ongoing support for the individuals responsible for the program and funding to continue the program.

RESOURCES

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919-757-6923

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ADMINISTRATORS' GUIDE

NEEDS

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT PEER HELPING

PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM DESIGN

- STAFF
  - TEAM LEADER
  - TRAINER
  - SUPERVISOR
  - EVALUATOR
- TRAINING
- FUNDING

BUDGET

PROPOSAL

RECRUITING AND SELECTING PEER HELPERS

TRAINING DESIGN

UTILIZATION OF PEER HELPERS

SUPERVISION

FACILITIES

EVALUATION